Andhra Pradesh could not be taken up for want of environmental clearance. In the recent years, exploration for Uranium in parts of the Nalgonda District, Andhra Pradesh has established medium tonnage Uranium deposits at Lambapur—Peddagattu areas and extensive surface shows around Chitrial area. However, exploration could not be carried out in the contiguous areas falling under the fringe zone of Rajiv Gandhi Tiger sanctuary in the Lambapur-Peddagattu and Chitrial areas for want of environmental clearance. These areas otherwise have potential for locating large tonnage of Uranium deposits.

(b) to (d) Eight nuclear reactors, two each at four sites, i.e., Tarapur, Maharashtra (TAPP-3&4-2x540 MWe), Kaiga, Karnataka (Kaiga 3&4-2x220 MWe), Kudankulam, Tamil Nadu (KK-1&2-2x1000 MWe) and Rawatbhata, Rajasthan (RAPP-596-2x220 MWe) are presently under different stages of construction. The Site Selection Committee of the Department of Atomic Energy is investigating sites in different parts of the country for setting up future nuclear power plants. With a view to utilise the available infrastructure at existing sites, the full potential of these sites for setting up nuclear plants is also being explored in addition to new sites.

Joint Venture for mining Beach Sand Minerals

885. SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the latest positions of the joint venture company, Kerala Minerals and Rare Earths Limited promoted by the Cochin Minerals and Rutiles Limited for mining and mineral separation of Beach Sand Minerals in the coastal area of Kerala;

(b) whether the State Government has issued mining lease to mine Beach Sand Minerals to private companies or joint venture companies;

(c) whether the State Government had declared its mining policy to allow private participation in the mining of Beach Sand Minerals; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed on 03.12.2001 amongst Indian

Rare Earths Ltd. (IREL), Kerala Rare Earths & Minerals Ltd. (KRML) and Cochin Minerals & Rutiles Ltd. (CNRL) for forming a Joint venture company for setting up a mining and minerals seperation plant based upon Chavara Kayamkulam deposits. As a follow-up action, a Project Report on mining and mineral separation has been furnished by KRML to IREL. A draft joint venture agreement has also been received by IREL for scrutiny and comments.

(b) to (d) Information is being collected from the Government of Kerala and a statement will be laid on the Table of the House.

Nuclear Energy Corporation

886. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up new corporations on nuclear energy based on light water reactors from Russia and France;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Not applicable.

(c) At present there is no proposal to set up new corporations for setting up Light Water Reactors.

Revamping of Post Office Saving Bank facility

887. SHRI K.B. KRISHNAMURTHY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) what steps are being taken to revamp the Post Office Saving Bank facility te offer more value-added banking services to the public considering the phenomenal growth in the small savings sector and of the advantage the postal department enjoys through a nation-wide network of post offices;

(b) whether the Department of Posts have entered into a tie-up with IDBI/UTI banks to offer such services across the Post Office Saving Bank counters; and